

which claims 15-18 depend, specifically recites a method that includes *selectively* transmitting a user identification in response to communications from each of a plurality of apparatuses.

Each of the rejections is based on a combination of Nickum and Garnault. The Examiner acknowledges that Nickum does not teach a gatekeeper device that transmits a user identification in response to a transmission from an apparatus. The Examiner relies upon Garnault for teaching a gatekeeper device that transmits a user identification in response to a communication from the apparatus. The Applicants acknowledge that Garnault teaches a conventional RFID device that communicates a user identification in response to communication from another device, but the Applicants respectfully note that Garnault's RFID does not *selectively* transmit the user identification.

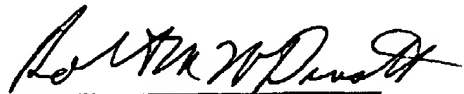
As taught by the Applicants, the claimed device "acts as a gatekeeper to *prevent uncontrolled use* of the personal information by the apparatus to be operated" (Applicants' page 1, line 29 through page 2, line 1). In a preferred embodiment, "the apparatus is not aware of the gatekeeper device until the user explicitly confirms that ... a relationship may be established or exploited" (Applicants' page 2, lines 16-18). Garnault's device, on the other hand, will respond to *any device* that communicates an RF signal at the appropriate frequency, because Garnault's device is not configured to *selectively* transmit the user identification.

In a preferred embodiment of the Applicants' invention, the device can be configured to selectively: not respond, to respond on command, or to automatically respond, to a transmission from an apparatus. The selection may be based on a user's explicit input, or to the time of day, or to other factors, such as the presence of other users or devices in the vicinity of the apparatus (Applicants' page 2, lines 21-24; page 6, lines 4-12). As can be seen, the *selective* transmission of a user's identification in response to a transmission by an apparatus facilitates useful functions and capabilities that neither Garnault, nor Nickum, nor their combination, provides.

Neither Nickum, nor Garnault, individually or collectively, teach or suggest the selective transmission of a user identification in response to a transmission from an apparatus, as specifically claimed in each of the Applicants' independent claims.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the present application to be in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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On 26 March 2003

By

